

O

THE OPRAH
MAGAZINE

WIN A TRIP to the Oprah Show,
the Ellen Show—Plus Every
Gift in Our Holiday Guide!

(CONTEST DETAILS, PAGE 39)

**YOU'VE GOT
THE POWER!**

Master the art
of being lucky

What Ellen DeGeneres
Knows for Sure (She Thinks),
Page 225

"THE SECRET TO REAL
HAPPINESS IS SHARING IT."
—OPRAH

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LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE

"I don't think there's
anything better you
can do in this world
than bring light
wherever you go."
—OPRAH



...The Ultimate Holiday Playlist, Unforgettable Heroes, Oprah's Favorite Cold Remedy,
Brilliant (Cheap!) Bling, the New Slimmed-Down Eggnog...

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And never broke
a single one.

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LIVE YOUR BEST

"Let's keep
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for all seasons."
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...a Few Great Friends, and a Gingerbread House in Move-in Condition!



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THE OPRAH MAGAZINE



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PARTY GIRLS:
Festive styles
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O | Behind the Scenes



Oprah & Ellen: They've Got It Covered

IT'S ANOTHER SUNNY SATURDAY in California, but who has time to notice? At Smashbox Studios in west L.A., *O*'s creative director, Adam Glassman, and his team are focused on the details: clothes, accessories, sets, and ambience. "The purple dress is looking washed out under these lights," says Glassman. "Let's go with that red one Prabal Gurung made for her." Rick Floyd, the set designer, and his 14-person crew (who've spent the last 39 hours sleeping in shifts and existing on a 7-Eleven diet of Doritos and beef jerky) put the finishing touches on a giant gingerbread house. "More icing! Easy on the gumdrops!" instructs Floyd. Santa's elves have nothing on these guys. Meanwhile, photographer Ruven Afanador is positioning stand-

ins for Oprah and Ellen DeGeneres as the caterers set up a buffet of comfort food. Enter Ellen, right on schedule. She checks out the wardrobe racks from Mary-Kate and Ashley ▶



COVER STORY (clockwise from top left): Oprah and Ellen feast their eyes on the life-size gingerbread house built for the shoot; photographer Ruven Afanador helps Ellen become present-able; three stylists wrap Ellen in lights; one of designer Prabal Gurung's sketches of the gown he created for Oprah; makeup artist Reggie Wells, hairstylist Andre Walker, and fashion editor Jenny Capitain get Oprah ready for her next shot; makeup artist Pati Dubroff and hairstylist Serge Normant give Ellen a touch-up.



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"I had the week from hell," Oprah says. "But I feel better now, and that's because of Ellen."

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 42] Olsen's clothing line, The Row, and shelves filled with the vegan shoes she favors, then greets Serge Normant, who is standing by to do her hair. Finally comes the true star of the shoot, Oprah's puppy, Sadie, trailed by a happily exhausted Oprah herself, who has just flown in from New York City after taping a live show in Central Park.

Ellen gives both a warm hug and, to Oprah, the gift of a fully loaded iPod. An hour later,

READY ON SET (clockwise from top left): Ellen and her assistant, Craig Peralta, and her executive producer, Andy Lassner, read tweets from her fans; Oprah introduces Sadie to Ellen; O editor in chief Susan Casey, O editor at large Gayle King, and Portia de Rossi get ready for the end-of-shoot toast; Oprah's hair gets one final brush from Walker while Ellen works on her pose; a sampling of the 75 pairs of shoes that were called in for the shoot; Afanador and O creative director Adam Glassman between shots.

with DeGeneres's playlist cranked up, the two women go to work in front of the camera—but soon it doesn't feel like work. "Love the hair," Oprah tells Ellen as Afanador snaps away. "Oh, I can get it for you," Ellen deadpans. "Serge, get Oprah this hair!" Energy ripples through the room. "Hi, baby!" Ellen calls to wife Portia de Rossi, who has dropped by for support.

As the day winds down, the Billecart-Salmon Champagne Rosé begins to flow for the traditional end-of-shoot toast. "You know," Oprah says, taking a sip, "going into this shoot, I had the week from hell, but I feel better now, and that's because of Ellen. She isn't just a delight, she *is* light. And I don't think there's anything better you can do in this world than bring light wherever you go." Cheers to that! **O**



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FOR MEN



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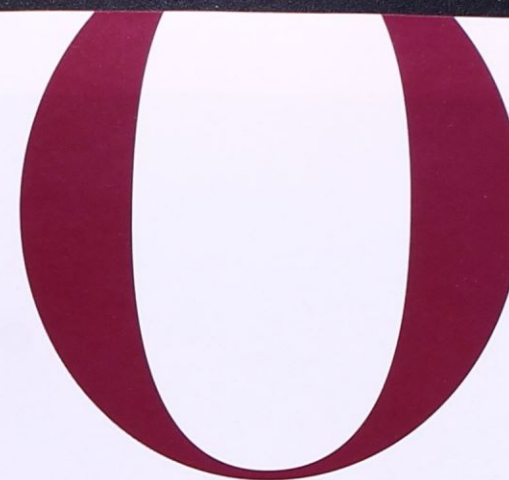


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“For only the second time in O history, I’m sharing the cover with a woman I adore.”



HERE WE GO!

E LLEN DEGENERES IS A WOMAN WHO CAN MAKE things happen. When she decided she wanted to be on the cover of *O*, she pulled out all the stops (as if you couldn't guess, those are her creative concepts above). It worked—for only the second time in *O* history, I'm sharing the cover with a woman I adore. Starting on page 42, take a peek at our photo shoot, learn what Ellen knows for sure, and listen in on our chat about what puts the twinkle in her eye.

This season is all about joy—and, of course, spreading that joy around. We've got 12 stories that illustrate the wonders of giving, whether the generosity extends to family, to friends, or all the way to the rooftops of Nepal (page 226).

Wherever December takes you, we want to help you savor it all: from the holiday parties (check out body-friendly strategies for dressing up, page 242) to the big family meals (discover how to make fantastic use of winter's favorite fruit, page 256). In fact, we have ideas to brighten every day of the season (don't miss our monthlong calendar of beauty tips, page 250).

And if you like this year's *O* List Holiday Edition (page 101), you'll love our 12-Day Holiday Give-O-Way sweepstakes. Enter at oprah.com, and you could receive every last *O* List item in this issue—or, for one winner, a little something just from Ellen and me (see how it works on page 39). It's our gift to you! Read on....

Oprah



THE O INTERVIEW

Oprah Ellen talks to DeGeneres

She's known for her sharp wit and easygoing attitude (and, of course, the sneakers and funky dance moves). But behind the comedy is a woman who's had to muster her courage to get where she is today. Ellen DeGeneres tells Oprah about her balanced life, her loving wife, and how she intends to take her new job as an *American Idol* judge *very* seriously.

Photograph by GEORGE BURNS

L

AST JANUARY, WHEN I FIRST

heard that Ellen DeGeneres wanted to be an *O* cover girl, I was sure it was a joke. She started with an announcement to the four million viewers of *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*: "Goodbye to the resolution to read," she quipped, "and hello to the resolution to be on the front cover of *O* in '09!" Then the crusade intensified. In March she launched an "O, Yes I Can!" campaign, and, in between unsuccessful attempts to reach me at the Harpo studios, she unveiled a series of mock *O* covers, including one on which she and I are riding a tandem bicycle through the countryside.

The campaign was so funny, I actually hesitated to make the call that finally ended it. But last May, during Ellen's 1,000th show, I surprised her by Skyping into the broadcast and inviting her to share this month's cover with me.

Of course, as far as covers go, this one is nothing compared with the one she did in April 1997, when she appeared on the front of *Time* magazine next to the headline "Yep, I'm Gay." In those days, Ellen—a Louisiana native who broke into stand-up comedy in the early '80s by performing at small clubs in New Orleans—was the star of her own sitcom, ABC's *Ellen*. As the show gained popularity and critical acclaim, Ellen, now 51, chose to reveal the secret she'd been carrying for years. What followed was a media circus leading up to the most-watched episode of her series: an estimated 42 million people tuned in to see Ellen's character also come out of the closet. But just as quickly, the crowds went away. The show's ratings started to crash, and a year later it was canceled.

In September 2003, Ellen came back to television as host of *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, now in its sixth season. When she's not delighting viewers with her quick wit and spontaneous dance moves, she's squeezing in one of her side gigs—like, say, hosting the Academy

Awards (which she did in 2007) or taking a spot on the judges' panel on *American Idol* (which she'll do in 2010). Away from the limelight, Ellen shares her life with the actress Portia de Rossi. The two began dating in 2004, and four years later, in a private ceremony at their home, they married. Despite the passage of California's Proposition 8 (which made same-sex marriage illegal in the state), the couple's union is still valid because it occurred before the November 4, 2008, vote.

When Ellen arrived at the photo shoot for our cover, I didn't have to ask her how she was doing; it showed on her face. She radiated the kind of peace and satisfaction that come only when you're living at your highest potential.

That's why, a few days after our photo session, I give Ellen a call—to talk about the balance she's obviously achieved in her life, and to get the story behind the glimmer in her eye.

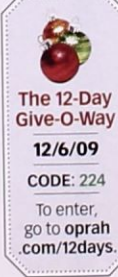
Two of Ellen's greatest milestones: the April 1997 *Time* magazine cover that heralded her coming out (above) and her August 2008 wedding to actress Portia de Rossi, at their home in Beverly Hills (left).

this crazy loud vibration that went on forever, and I lay in bed thinking that the house was going to catch fire because there'd been an electrical short. So I went down to the basement—I haven't been down to the basement since we moved in two years ago—and lying next to all the audiovisual equipment is an audiobook called *Being in Balance*.

OPRAH: Oh my goodness. Isn't that just how the world works?

ELLEN: There's always a reason things happen.

OPRAH: You're exactly [CONTINUED ON PAGE 276]



FROM LEFT: LARA PORTAZ/GETTY IMAGES; TIME MAGAZINE.

What I Know for Sure...I Think



HERE ARE A FEW THINGS I KNOW FOR SURE:

1. My home address. But I'm not printing it here. Nice try, Oprah.

2. I know that "personality can open doors, but only character can keep them open." And I know that for sure because I read it on the sign at the dry cleaner's.

3. I forgot what number 3 is.

4. Sometimes I forget things.

5. I'm sure I'm good at making lists.



Performing at The Improv, circa 1991. Below: One source of Ellen's wisdom (see number 2 on her list).

BY THE WAY, I SHOULD POINT OUT THAT THERE ARE things I know for sure and things I don't know for sure. Also, there are things I wish I never knew. Like did you ever see that *Primetime* report about hotel rooms and what's on the bedspreads? Exactly.

Actually, there's nothing I know for sure because I know for sure that things change.

For a long time I thought I knew for sure who I was. I grew up in New Orleans and became a comedian. And there was everything that came along with that. The nightclubs. The smoking. The drinking. Then I turned 13.

While I was doing stand-up, I thought I knew for sure that success meant getting everyone to like me. So I became whoever I thought people wanted me to be. I'd say yes when I wanted to say no, and I even wore a few dresses. * And it worked. I got my own sitcom.**

The show was very successful. I had everything I'd hoped for, but I wasn't being myself. So I decided to be honest about who I was. It was strange: The people who loved me for being funny suddenly didn't like me for being...me.



I had a really tough time for a few years. My show was gone. My phone wasn't ringing. There wasn't one job offer. And at that point, I thought I knew for sure that I wouldn't work in Hollywood again.

Eventually, I decided to go back to how I started my career, and I wrote an HBO special. Then I got my talk show. And look at me now...I'm on the cover of *O*. And that's the highest honor we give in this country.

I know for sure I would never change any of the hard times I went through in my life. Because it was in those times that I grew the most and gained the most perspective.

It's our challenges and obstacles that give us layers of depth and make us interesting. Are they fun when they happen? No. But they are what make us unique. And that's what I know for sure...I think.

* See page 272.

**Ellen, now available on DVD from amazon.com or wherever DVDs are sold.



Holiday party ensembles for every body type, page 242.

NEWSSTAND COVER (OPRAH ON TOP OF GIFT BOX)

On Oprah: Top, Pilar Rossi, \$750; 212-764-2534. Pants, Reem Acra, \$1,150, similar styles available; 212-308-8760. Earrings, Anna Hu Haute Joaillerie; 212-826-1116. Ring, H. Stern, \$6,100; hstern.net for stores. Shoes, Manolo Blahnik, \$715, Barneys New York; 888-822-7639. *On Ellen:* Shirt, Maison Martin Margiela, \$845; 310-284-8093. Vest, Gucci; gucci.com for stores. Pants, The Row, similar styles available, Blake, Chicago; 312-202-0047. Shoes, Comme des Garçons Play X Converse, \$110, Comme des Garçons, NYC; 212-604-9200.

SUBSCRIBER COVER (ELLEN IN GIFT BOX)

On Oprah: Blouse and skirt, Reem Acra, \$1,900 and \$2,270 (available in a long version only); 212-308-8760. Earrings, NSR Nina Runsdorf, select Neiman Marcus stores; 800-365-7989. Belt, Reem Acra, \$1,400, Bergdorf Goodman, NYC; 212-753-7300. Ring, Sylva & Cie, Bergdorf Goodman, NYC; 212-753-7300. Shoes, Jimmy Choo, \$595, Bergdorf Goodman, NYC; 212-753-7300. *On Ellen:* Cardigan, Yves Saint Laurent, \$1,190; 310-271-4110. Tank, The Row, \$180; barneys.com. Pants, The Row, similar styles available, Blake, Chicago; 312-202-0047. Socks, Paul Smith, \$36; 323-951-4800. Sneakers, Yves Saint Laurent, \$390; 310-271-4110.

INSIDE COVER (OPRAH IN RED DRESS)

On Oprah: Dress, Prabal Gurung, \$4,850, by special order; sales@prabalgurung.com. Earrings, NSR Nina Runsdorf, \$6,200, select Neiman Marcus stores; 800-365-7989. Bracelet, Lorraine Schwartz, Bergdorf Goodman, NYC; 212-753-7300. Shoes, Jimmy Choo, \$595, Bergdorf Goodman, NYC; 212-753-7300. *On Ellen:* Jacket and pants, The Row, similar styles available, Blake, Chicago; 312-202-0047. Shirt, Black Fleece, \$150; 212-929-2763. Bow tie, Dries van Noten, \$135, Barneys New York; 888-822-7639. Shoes, Esquivel, \$600; esquivelshoes.com for more information.

INSIDE COVER (OPRAH AND ELLEN IN FRONT OF A GINGERBREAD HOUSE)

On Oprah: Dress, Teri Jon, \$395, feathers sold separately by special order; terijon.com. Earrings, Lorraine Schwartz, Bergdorf Goodman, NYC; 212-753-7300. Bracelet, NSR Nina Runsdorf, select Neiman Marcus stores; 800-365-7989. Ring, Pomellato; 800-254-6020. Shoes, Valentino, \$695, select Saks Fifth Avenue stores; 877-612-7257. *On Ellen:* Jacket, Comme des Garçons SHIRT, \$1,185, Weathervane, Santa Monica;

O shop guide

(ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE)

310-393-5344. Henley, Number (N)ine, \$220; 212-431-8699. Jeans, RRL, \$365, Malibu; 310-317-9592. Gloves, Jo Gordon, \$98, Barneys New York; 888-822-7639. Belt, A.P.C., \$90; 323-297-0414. Shoes, N.D.C., \$650, Barneys New York; 888-822-7639.

TABLE OF CONTENTS P.3 *On Donna Weinrecht:* Dress, Kate Spade, \$395; 800-519-3778.

LOOK WHAT WE FOUND! P.125 1. Metallic slingback, Steve Madden, \$90; stevemadden.com. 2. Satin shoe, D&G, \$620; amazon.com. 3. Soigné heel, Jessica Simpson Collection, \$89; jessicasimpsoncollection.com. 4. Gold lamé flat, Christian Siriano for Payless, \$30; payless.com. 5. Emerald satin heel, Kate Spade New York, \$325; 800-519-3778. 6. Evening boot, Report Signature, \$325; reportshoes.com.

ADAM SAYS P.128 Jacket, Lulu's, \$70; lulus.com. Blouse,

Hunter Dixon, \$319; hunterdixon.com for stores. Skirt, Magaschoni, \$248, Saks Jandel, Chevy Chase, Maryland; 301-652-2250. Necklace, Carolee, \$60; carolee.com. Clutch, La Regale, \$90; laregale.com. Heels, Pierre Hardy, \$890, The Webster, Miami Beach; 305-674-7899. Tank, Tucker, \$428; tuckerwebshop.com. Cardigan, Vince, \$275, Saks Fifth Avenue; 877-612-7257. Trousers, J.Crew, \$138; jcrew.com. Flats, Kate Spade New York, \$225; katespade.com. Necklace, Sheila Fajl, \$90; hsn.com. Clutch, JCPenney, \$30; 877-346-3527 for stores. Limited-Edition Holiday Dress collection, Target, \$40 each; target.com. Skating scene cardigan, Talbots, \$99; talbots.com. Skier motif cardigan, L.L.Bean, \$139; llbean.com. **P.130** 1. Jimmy Choo, \$448; jimmychoo.com for stores. 2. Boutique 9, \$260; ninewest.com. 3. Banana Republic, \$98; bananarepublic.com. 4. Sam Edelman, \$149; revolveclothing



The only outfits you can't buy on this page: fashion classics, circa 1975, sported by Ellen DeGeneres and her grandmother, Mildred Pfeffer. The O cover model—and famously pants-preferring comedian—talks about her checkered history with dresses, page 225.



Shoes that add sparkle to winter evenings, page 125.

.com. 5. Tod's, \$925; tod's.com for stores. 6. Timberland Boot Company, \$190; timberland.com. Jacket, Sundance Catalog, \$158; sundancecatalog.com. Turtle-neck, Saks Fifth Avenue Collection, \$178; 877-612-7257. Jeans, Tommy Hilfiger, \$70, Macy's; 800-622-9748. Scarf, Me & Kashmere, \$165, Roberta Freymann, NYC; 212-585-3767. Trenchcoat in natural or pink, Joan Rivers, \$80 each; qvc.com. All Stella McCartney for GapKids; gap.com. Dress, \$58; cardigan, \$78; tights, \$14, turtle-neck, \$24; sweater, \$98; skirt, \$58; boots, \$58.

BEAUTY GAZETTE: ASK VAL P.152 Sleeveless jacket, Michael Kors, \$1,295; 212-452-4685. Turtle-neck, Michael Kors, \$950, Neiman Marcus; 800-365-7989.

12 STORIES OF GIVING P.232 Earrings, Joan Hornig, \$1,725, Bergdorf Goodman, NYC; 212-753-7300; joanhornig.com. *From left:* "Waffle Cuff," Joan Hornig, \$575, Bergdorf Goodman, NYC; 212-753-7300; joanhornig.com. "Alexandra Cuff," Joan Hornig, \$980, Bergdorf Goodman, NYC; 212-753-7300; joanhornig.com. "Evergreen Branch Cuff," Joan Hornig, \$745, Bergdorf Goodman, NYC; 212-753-7300; joanhornig.com. "Double Waffle Cuff," Joan Hornig, \$475, Bergdorf Goodman, NYC; 212-753-7300; joanhornig.com. "Philanthropy Message Bangles," Joan Hornig, \$690, ▶

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: DIEGO UCHTEL; LARA ROBBY/STUDIO D; COURTESY OF ELLEN DEGENERES.



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OPRAH TALKS TO ELLEN DEGENERES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 224

like I am. I know that everything happens for a reason, so I look at everything like, Okay, what does that mean, and What am I supposed to be getting from that?

ELLEN: Right.

OPRAH: You know, you can make yourself nuts doing that, though. But it's also the way to live, I think. How long have you been living this way?

ELLEN: Well, I think I've always been a searcher. But right before I decided to come out, I went on a spiritual retreat called "Changing the Inner Dialogue of Your Subconscious Mind." I'd never been to anything like it before, and all my friends were taking bets on how long I'd last with no TV, no radio, no phone. But for me that was the beginning of paying attention to all the little things.

"I cry often and easily. You're supposed to laugh, you're supposed to cry, you're not supposed to shove your feelings under the rug."

OPRAH: Would you say that coming out was the seminal moment in your life?

ELLEN: Oh yeah, because it stripped everything away. The whole world was talking about me. You know, if you're going to be honest with yourself, you have to admit that you go into show business wanting people to talk about you and wanting everyone to know who you are. But that also means there are going to be a whole bunch of people who don't like you. No matter who you are. I'm sure there's somebody out there who doesn't like Betty White because she's short and has white hair.

OPRAH: Refresh my memory: At what point did you make the decision to come out? You were three years into your sitcom?

ELLEN: I was four years in, because the fifth year is when they canceled me. I think I've told you about a dream I had. I was struggling with the idea of coming out—what it would do to my career and to me—and in

this dream, I was holding a tiny finch in the palm of my hand. I could feel how much I loved this bird and that it was safe in my hand, and I was reaching in to put it back in its cage—one of these thin, bamboo, beautiful, multitiered cages—and as I was putting the bird back in, I realized that the cage was against a window and the bird could fly out. The bird realized it at the same time I did, and I became the bird. And the bird looked at me and wanted to fly out, but I looked at the bird and said, "But you're safe in here in a beautiful cage. Don't leave." And the bird just looked at me and flew out the window.

OPRAH: Wow.

ELLEN: So I was like, *Okay, I know what that means.* Until then I'd had no idea I was in a cage. I was in this beautiful setting, and I was making money and had everyone taking care of me.

OPRAH: So once that veil lifted, did everything change?

ELLEN: Well, there were lots of different veils and lots of different layers—but just to say the words was so huge for me. You know, people say, "Why do you have to tell everybody, who cares, and why do you have to announce it?" It's because it's your truth and the truth shall set you free.

OPRAH: To be able to say it out loud to the world.

ELLEN: But then it turned into everybody telling me to shut up. I was on your show and I was on the cover of *Time*, and there was article after article, and then articles reporting on articles, and it became this storm. I was getting attacked for talking about it so much, and I was like, "I am not talking about it, you are." And then everybody was hating me and "Oh, shut up already," and that's when the show went down in flames. I actually think the show got better after I came out. The season that no one watched—

OPRAH: ...turned out to be the best season. I remember. But it's so important to say that out loud so people can also see for themselves how the things that broke you open actually allowed you to be set free.

ELLEN: I think Diane Sawyer told me she read something that said the cracks in your heart let the sun shine through. I just thought that was beautiful. And it's all part of balance. I'm a comedian, and I definitely see the humor in a lot of things. I am also sad a lot. I cry often and easily. I think you're supposed to feel all kinds of things. You're supposed to laugh, you're supposed to cry, you're not supposed to shove your feelings under the rug. I was raised in an atmosphere of "everything's fine." But as I got older, I was like, "Well no, everything's

not fine. There is stuff that's sad." I am a really sensitive person. I think I am too sensitive sometimes, especially in this business.

OPRAH: But you do laugh more than you cry, don't you?

ELLEN: Oh, sure. I'm not like a depressed person. But I am saddened by how people treat one another and how we are so shut off from one another and how we judge one another, when the truth is, we are all one connected thing. We are all from the same exact molecules.

OPRAH: Is that why you became vegan?

ELLEN: I became vegan because I saw footage of what really goes on in the slaughterhouses and on the dairy farms. As Linda McCartney used to say, if they had glass walls, no one would eat meat. And let me tell you, I loved eating meat. I loved lamb, I loved chicken, I loved my cheeseburgers....

OPRAH: Did you notice a difference when you became vegan?

ELLEN: Well I felt better about myself, and I felt healthier living in a cruelty-free way. I haven't been sick since, I am not as tired, and I've lost weight. And I am lucky: I have a chef, so it's easy for me. For a lot of people, it's harder.

OPRAH: Trying to do it so you stay balanced—back to that word, balance—is work. You've got to know what you're doing to get all your nutrition.

ELLEN: Right.

OPRAH: Okay. So, when I saw you at the photo shoot for the cover, what I was most struck by was the light in your eyes.

ELLEN: Well, of course there was a light—I was with you!

OPRAH: [Laughs] No, there really was a twinkle in your eye that comes only from a sense of well-being. I'm telling you, I recognize it when I see it. What's that all about for you?

ELLEN: You told me you wanted to talk about this, so I was thinking about it. And I asked my massage person: What is it about me that you think is balanced?

OPRAH: [Laughs] That's like when Gayle was invited to speak about self-esteem and she calls me and says, "How do I feel about self-esteem?" So your massage person said...

ELLEN: She said I constantly challenge myself. She has known me for 11 years, and she said when something goes wrong, instead of running away from it, I look at it and go, "What's my part in it, what's my responsibility?"

OPRAH: And are you able to challenge other people to accept their responsibility?

ELLEN: Oh yeah, and that was such a huge thing for me, because I was raised to be quiet about things like that—you know, just keep your mouth closed. Not in a strict way—my parents were very passive. My

father would never confront anybody about anything and is just kind and gentle. And my mother is really funny and sarcastic. But in my family, nothing was ever confronted. Yet now it's easy for me to tell other people what they're doing and how it makes me feel.

OPRAH: You don't have the need to please.

ELLEN: Well, sure, I want people to like me—but not at my expense. I just learned that there are too many people who are going to have an opinion about me whether I am kind to them or not. I can't control what they're feeling. I am not a yeller and I don't have a temper, but I do want people to do their best. And if someone is a friend and I see that they're doing stuff that is not helping them grow, I will make it a point to talk to them about it.

OPRAH: Nongrowth seems to be a real deal breaker for you.

ELLEN: I think you need to be around people who stimulate you.

OPRAH: What was really delightful and heartwarming was to see you in the presence of Portia and vice versa. When she first walked into the shoot, your face lit up. Tell me about this relationship and how it has enlightened your life.

ELLEN: Well, we're perfect for each other. She is so beautiful and so smart and so funny, and with her, I have that sense of "I'm done now." I'm settled. I know that part of my life is taken care of. I've got love. I've got someone who will be with me till the day I die.

OPRAH: Is that why you wanted to be married?

ELLEN: Getting married was more important to her, really. She says all the time how lucky we are that we had each other in that short window of time when it was legal to marry, because a lot of people hadn't found their person, and then suddenly that right was taken away. I'm tearing up thinking about it—we got to get married, and have a wedding. I grew up thinking I'd never get to do that.

OPRAH: What do you refer to each other as—"my partner"?

ELLEN: No, it's "my wife." She says "my wife" and I say "my wife."

OPRAH: So there you are on your farm with your wife and your horses and your dogs. So balanced. But are you going to be able to maintain this balance, this time for yourself, with the American Idol schedule?

ELLEN: Well, look at you! I don't have a radio show or a magazine. For a couple of months, I'll just fly out and do those audition things.

OPRAH: That's what I can't wait to see—you, on the road for those auditions. ▶

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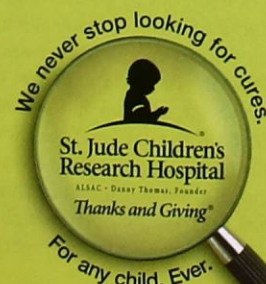
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OPRAH TALKS TO ELLEN DEGENERES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 277

ELLEN: I'll start live on the air in February. But I'm going to look at the tapes to see if they missed people who I would have put through.

OPRAH: *Fantastic. You're not afraid of confronting!*

ELLEN: That's right. And I'll be careful about hurting people's feelings. I know what it's like to stand up there and perform.

OPRAH: *Did the Idol people come to you, or did you approach them?*

ELLEN: They came to me, and it was a total surprise. I like to try new things because I get bored so easily. And I like the show, so I thought it was a great idea.

OPRAH: *Okay. So when you're at home, you're not dancing, are you?*

ELLEN: I'll dance if there's music on. I like dancing.

OPRAH: *I should have said, when you're home and not shooting covers with me. Speaking of which, how did you come up with this whole get-on-the-cover-of-O idea, anyway?*

ELLEN: It got started because I was in a CoverGirl ad that was on the inside cover of your magazine. I held it up on my show and said, "I'm on the cover of O! I'm on the inside cover, but I'm on the cover!" And that rolled into, "Well, if I'm that close, I might as well be on the cover cover!" and I started the campaign. And I guess you felt so guilty about putting Michelle Obama on the cover that you decided you had to put me on the cover, too.

OPRAH: *No, this is what happened. We had already planned the cover with Michelle. And then you started your campaign, and I was like, "Well, is she really serious?" So we waited a couple of weeks, and I decided you were.*

ELLEN: I was not serious, though, because I didn't think it was going to happen! No one had ever been on the cover with you, so I really thought it was just a joke. But then once the Michelle Obama cover came along, that's when I really started going after it. And I was shocked and thrilled when you actually went for it.

OPRAH: *It was fun. Tell me, are you having as much fun as you appear to be having?*

ELLEN: It's a lot of work to put a brand-new monologue and a brand-new show on the air and find comedy every single day. It's challenging and it's the hardest thing I have ever done, but it's the best-suited thing for me. The more relaxed I get and the more confident I feel, the more I get to play and be myself and say whatever I feel like saying and not worry about whether I'm being a good interviewer. Although sometimes, I admit, you're talking to people and you're ▶

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OPRAH TALKS TO ELLEN DEGENERES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 279

like, "Oh please, have something to say!" But in general I'm just more and more confident that if I'm myself, people are going to enjoy it more.

OPRAH: You get paid for being yourself.

ELLEN: It's amazing. It's crazy.

OPRAH: That's what happens when you tell the truth. You open that door for that bird to fly out.

ELLEN: It's so weird because I love you so much, and to come to this place and do a photo shoot with you—I'm not surprised I had a brightness in my eyes.

OPRAH: Well, I'm happy to be able to call you my friend. But I know you have to get back to work, so either I'm going to have you up to my house for dinner, or you guys are going to have me down to yours.

ELLEN: You have an open invitation.

OPRAH: Thanks! 

GOING DEEP CONTINUED FROM PAGE 237

to go in after the 2004 Indonesian tsunami and help rebuild, and the apparel company Volcom recently initiated a campaign to donate thousands of surf trunks to local charities. Surfers for Cetaceans, an organization cofounded by Australian surfer Dave Rastovich, has drawn worldwide attention to the commercial massacre of dolphins in Japan; his fearless investigation of the underwater slaughterhouse dubbed "the Killing Cove" inspired the 2009 documentary *The Cove*.

Maybe a larger sense of commitment and perspective is simply endemic to a sport that involves a thrilling proximity to nature, in all its soul-stirring limitlessness. "The surfing horizon is not bounded by a white line or fairway," says the 1977 World Champion and Surfrider board member Shaun Tomson. "It spans as far as the eye can see, and in that idea of our playing field as the horizon—which connects all of us—we have a different philosophical view of how our sport or lifestyle or art form fits into the world. I think it's a fundamental law of surfing that we all must give back." 

Zach Weisberg is online editor for Surfer Magazine.

BLOOD BROTHER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 240

it lacks a particular combination of antigens, which makes it especially useful for specialized cases: transplants, people who have been transfused so often that they reject regular blood, and fragile babies.

When Ronald Reagan was shot, Fischer arranged for two receipts to go to him. Was there a thank-you note? Nope, but never mind. Still, he gets a kick out of what he calls "the notoriety," the blizzard of citations, certificates, and plaques, and he proudly mentions that he was named one of President George H.W. Bush's Points of Light.

You'd think by now that Fischer would have made it into the *Guinness World Records*, but he's behind the current recordholder, Englishman Anthony Davis, and Maurice Wood in St. Louis, who is just a few pints ahead. He and Wood have talked; neither one is about to give up. Fischer's keeping an eye on Wood, who recently moved into an assisted living residence, so who knows?

On this bright morning at the country club, the technicians fuss over Fischer as the TV cameras roll and a spry jazz combo plays. The other donors smile at him as they leave with their gifts—small pots of chrysanthemums, Glen Campbell CDs. None of the local politicians he's been hoping for have shown up, but Fischer seems content, telling stories and savoring the moment. How much longer will he keep on giving? "Until I drop." He adds wryly, "After this, no more big events. Fifty gallons? Do the math...."

For now, he's planning to take the rest of the day off, maybe do some chores for his wife. He'll be back when it's time. 

Helen Rogan has written for many publications, including *The New York Times*. She lives in Brooklyn.

MANY HAPPY RETURNS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 240

needed to be rushed to the emergency room. I reluctantly brought Jessica Lynn Cohen back inside.

A couple of months later, I was hit by a car as I crossed a street in Culver City, California. At the moment of impact, I did not have that common experience of seeing my life passing before my eyes; I had the unmistakable feeling that Jessica Lynn Cohen was angry. I called Mercedes and asked if anything unusual had occurred in the days preceding my accident. She admitted that she'd taken Jessica Lynn Cohen to the Salvation Army.

Get her back, I said.

We tried finding a new home for her. A friend—a single guy without kids—finally agreed to take her in. Within two weeks, he'd developed a pilonidal cyst and his brother in Florida was arrested for embezzlement. Our friend returned her and asked that we never [CONTINUED ON PAGE 282]

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O What I Know for Sure

"A gift is your way of expressing how you feel about another person."



WHAT DELIGHTS ME MOST about the holiday season is that people are more open to giving and sharing. And actively thinking about how to spread more joy.

There is no better feeling, for sure.

I still remember the first time I stepped outside my box of giving only to family and friends, and did something significant for someone I didn't know. I was a reporter in Baltimore and had covered a story about a young mother and her children. I can't recall what difficulty had befallen them, but I'll never forget going back to their home and taking the whole family to a mall to buy winter coats. They so appreciated the gesture, and I learned how good it feels to do something unexpected for someone.

Since that time in the late '70s, I've been blessed with the ability to give really great gifts—everything from cashmere sheets to college educations. I've given homes. Cars. Trips around the world. The services of a wonderful nanny. But the best gift anyone can give, I believe, is the gift of sharing themselves.

Five years ago, at my 50th birthday luncheon,

every woman in attendance wrote a note sharing what our friendship meant to her. All the notes were placed in a silver box. That box still has a treasured space on my nightstand; some days, if I'm feeling less than joyful, I'll pull out a note and let it lift me back up.

After the Legends gathering at my home in 2005—when I brought together 18 magnificent bridge-building, boundary-breaking women and a few dozen of the younger women whose way they paved—I received thank-you letters from all the "young'uns" in attendance. The letters were calligraphed and bound together in a book. They are among my most valued possessions. And they inspired me recently, when a friend of mine was going through a rough time: I called all of *her* friends and asked them to write her love notes, which I then had bound into a book....

I gave to someone else what had been given to me.

Every gift is your way of expressing how you feel about another person.

I know for sure that's what we're here to do: Keep the joy thing going for all seasons.

Oprah

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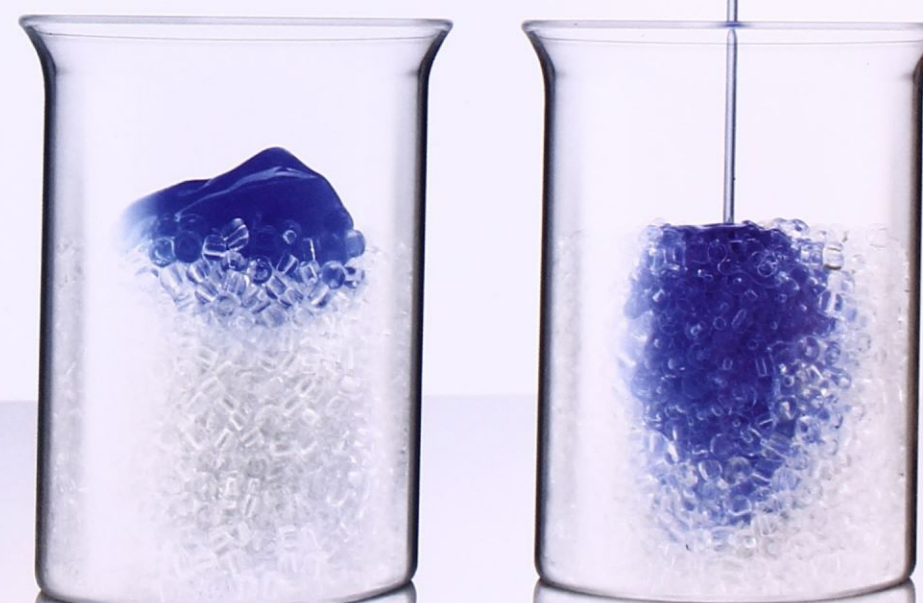
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